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pieces of the past and of the present are scattered to the four winds, without profit for the successive generations. Immediate action is necessary, for in a few years the speculators and plutocrats will have monopolized all the masterpieces, and it will be too late to reconstitute those sacred reserves which a great museum ought to contain. These warnings, by the way, are equally applicable to the American patriots who are patrons of the art of their country; the enemies, whose power is increasing daily, are the speculators and the plutocrats.

At the present moment it would seem that in the matter of decorative art the rivalry between the nations is on pretty equal terms. As for the French they are perfectly aware that they are wrong in being presumptuously confident in themselves. They know they are threatened by England, Belgium and Germany. The brutal statistics of their imports and exports show the danger in which French art industries now are. As one writer says: "This would be an invasion more terrible for us than that of 1870, the disastrous results of which, with wisdom and patience, we shall one day be able to repair. And still we must have the courage to confess it, in this new war, perhaps unexpected, which is being waged against us, we shall succumb if we do not appeal to all the intelligence, aptitude and artistic passion that exists amongst us, in order to give to our national genius a sort of renovating impulsion."

On this question of modern French taste, Mr. Henry Penon, an artist, and an authority made some interesting observations in a little pamphlet on the "Mobilier National," exhibited last year at the Union Centrale. Speaking of the modern fashion of organizing interiors with the ancient styles for rules, Mr. Penon justly remarks, that not only is taste necessary, but also the science of ornamentation. It is not sufficient to go back to some epoch to seek the best compositions of that epoch, either in old pieces or in modern reproductions. What is needed above all is unity of conception. The interior must appear to have been created by a single will, and with a personal artistic sentiment. This is just the rock on which our modern reproducers are shipwrecked. If they had arrived at a proper severity of principles by an analytical study of the past, they would never be guilty of those heterogeneous assemblages of inharmonious and often incorrect pieces of furniture, and those strange medleys of tissues discordant in tone and aspect, such as we see only too often in modern interiors. Mr. Henry Penon remarks that the modern manufacturers produce excellent furniture, bronzes, etc., and remarkable reproductions of old tissues, with all their richness of coloring, besides certain simple stuffs that are suitable for setting off the others. He concludes, therefore, that the want of taste which characterizes modern interiors is not the result of poor manufactures, but of the want of unity, and he recommends industrial artists to direct their efforts towards this principle, and to convince themselves of the neces-

sity of not sacrificing purity of style to that expression so characteristic of true distinction, *le comme il faut*.

I quote, at some length, these theoretical and abstract observations, because they do really sum up, to a great extent, the spirit in which artistic creators ought to work, whether those creators be French, or American, or English. Good taste ought to have no nationality.

To conclude, here is an idea for the decoration of a bath-room, an idea which has never been executed except in a romancer's dream, by Mr. Edmond de Goncourt. It is the bath-room of one of his heroines, *La Faustin*. The actress, La Faustin, who was in the habit of passing an hour

porcelain. The ceiling was very original; in the centre a rosace of looking glass, the fragments set in carved wood, imitated the open roof of a kiosk. The glass was tinted sky blue, with trails of flowers painted on it. Around the rosace was a large square frame, with deep corners, formed of stratifications of Baccarat crystal. In the middle of the room a large brass brasero contained a tree of white lilac. The bath itself was of pure white faience, decorated on the edge only with a trail of myrtle leaves. The two water taps were swans necks in burnished silver. In the decoration of her bath-room, it is needless to say, La Faustin had not counted the expense. But what a delicious idea of decoration!

#### THE ESTHETE AT ALBANY.

THE *Albany Journal* says: The artist to whom has been intrusted the responsibility of preparing plans for the grounds and approaches to the Capitol, has given profound thought to devising a main approach that should be at once easy and esthetic. Walks through an unbroken lawn from the river to the top of the hill would be too common and prosaic. Stone steps from one terrace to another would render the ascent too laborious for members of the Legislature. Cars on an inclined railway, to be hauled up by stationary power in the basement of the Capitol, would give the aspect too mechanical and stiff an aspect. Avoiding all these ordinary means of ascending the hillside, the designer has, after careful computations and measurements, decided to drive a tunnel at right angles to the river, straight under the hill to a point directly under the central court of the Capitol. The mouth of the tunnel will be a few hundred feet back from the river. Between this point and the river a canal will be cut to the depth of the bottom of the tunnel, which is to be on a level with the bottom of the river.

The tunnel and canal will be large enough for gondolas, or boats, to float abreast, and the former will be divided throughout the entire length by a partition of plate glass depending from the roof to the surface of the water. At the Capitol end of the tunnel an elevator shaft will be sunk and elevators, with air cushions under them, will ply up and down into the building above the tunnel.

The gondolas and the interior of the tunnel are to be wrought in the highest style of art. The former will have mahogany hulls with bronze railing, and with cabins finished in ebony and rosewood. The upholstery will be in embossed morocco leather partially gilded, like that on the sofas and walls of the Senate Chamber. They will be sloop-rigged, the masts being rosewood surmounted by a golden American eagle, flappant. The mainsails, which are to be of raw silk, light and fleecy, will have the State emblems embroidered on one side, while on the other the portraits of the present members of Assembly, will be inwrought in gold and silver thread. The tunnel throughout is to be lighted by electricity.

Estheticism has certainly captured Albany.



PANEL IN SYLVAIN-DECOR.

in the water every day, maintained that in the inactivity of the bath the eyes needed to be distracted by something pretty on the walls, and so, says the romancer, she had asked Bracquemond, the ingenious ornamentist, to execute for her twenty-four large slabs of faience, which entirely covered the walls. On these smooth panels the ceramist had painted birds rising from rivers, lakes in the midst of the lanceolated foliage of well-watered banks, and the brilliant flocks of these birds, with their vitrified colors, crossed the bright enamel of the verdure like flashes of light. On the pavement of the room the artist had simulated the profusion of white cherry blossoms and rosy petals of Japanese quince, strewn by some great wind. The seats were stools of Japanese